

supplemental appropriations bill that would have an additional \$600 million to go for emergency food assistance. That will then be able to get to Africa with all of its famine that is ravaging the land.

It is my hope, as the Appropriations Committees are meeting in conference right now on the emergency supplemental to determine the final outcome, that they will honor all those images they have seen on television of starving children and they will not reduce that \$600 million very much.

It is with this spirit of thanks, of humility, and thanksgiving that I come to speak on behalf of this legislation and to thank the Senate and the many participants here who have worked out all the kinks in this legislation so we could pass it in a unanimous fashion.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— NOMINATION OF PRISCILLA OWEN

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, as in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that there be an additional 6 hours for debate on the Owen nomination, provided further that the time be equally divided between the chairman and ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, or their designees, and that following the conclusion of that time, the Senate proceed to a vote on the confirmation of the nomination, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, we on this side are perplexed. We have indicated to the majority leader that there are at least three circuit judges who, with just a little bit of work, could be approved this week. The average during the Clinton 8 years was eight circuit judges a year. If the three were approved, that would be five already by Easter.

One of those is Edward C. Prado of the Fifth Circuit. They could go to that tomorrow—tonight. So we believe there is more here than meets the eye. There are three circuit judges who are available with just a little bit of work. This has all been discussed with the majority leader.

So for these and many other reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I modify the request to 10 additional hours.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Yes. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, we have approved, during the time President Bush has been President, 116 judges. Two have been turned down—116 to 2. One of those who was turned down is back. Owen is back. This would be the first time in the history of this country that a judge who has been turned down is back and would be approved.

The hours that have been suggested by my friend from Utah I appreciate very much, but there are productive things that could be done during those 10 hours, including the approval of more judges. There could be at the end of this week 120 judges instead of 116.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask if any number of hours would be sufficient for the Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Speaking for the Senator from Nevada, there is not a number in the universe that would be sufficient.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### CUBAN OPPRESSION

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I wish to call the attention of the Senate to the important events happening right now in the island nation of Cuba. Over the past several weeks, Fidel Castro has been rounding up democracy activists, independent journalists, librarians, and signers of the Varela Project and throwing them in jail.

Fidel Castro has used the world's focus on the war in Iraq to divert attention in order for him to brutally crack down and further oppress Cubans who yearn for freedom. It has been difficult to get the exact number, but we think it is approximately 80 Cubans who have been arrested. Yesterday, a number of those activists who had been arrested were sentenced to terms of 15 to 25 years—if you can believe that—on charges of “undermining the socialist state.” It is reported that at least 11 of those could get life sentences, and at least one could get the death penalty.

I take the floor of the Senate to call to its attention that last night the Senate passed S. Res. 97, a resolution introduced by this Senator from Florida and cosponsored by the junior Senator from Virginia, Mr. ALLEN. The resolution passed the Senate unanimously. It condemns these actions, and it calls for the release of the prisoners of conscience in Cuba.

Why did the Senate want to take a stand, and why do we want to bring further attention to this other than has already been in the Nation's newspapers, pointing out that under the cloak of the world's attention being diverted to Iraq, Fidel Castro has started this crackdown and these arrests and these sentences, even possibly a death sentence? Well, it goes back to the fact that the Cuban Government does not like the world's attention that has been brought to the courageous 11,000 people who signed the petition under the Cuban law—the Cuban Constitu-

tion—which said that if at least 10,000 people sign a petition, the issues in that petition are then brought to the national assembly for action. Not only did 10,000 brave, courageous Cuban souls sign that petition, but over 11,000 did. It called for actions that you and I take for granted.

It called for freedom of speech, freedom of the press, release of political prisoners, and a free enterprise economy. It called for them to be brought before the Cuban National Assembly.

The Varela Project embodies the principles upon which all the world agrees: the right of the Cuban people to petition their government for civil and human rights, including free and fair elections.

The leader of this project, Oswaldo Paya, has continued to advance this important project at great risk to himself, his family, and his associates.

In May of 2002, Oswaldo Paya led a group of Cuban citizens who delivered exactly 11,020 verified signatures to the Cuban National Assembly supporting that referendum on civil liberties and all of the issues I have mentioned.

These are basic rights to which anyone is entitled. Recent reports indicate that the Varela network has been especially targeted in this crackdown by Fidel Castro. I take us back to last year, realizing the courageous effort by Senor Paya and the signers of that petition.

I sponsored and this Senate adopted the resolution 87 to 0, with the help of other supporters of the resolution, Senator DODD and Senator Helms. That resolution commended the Varela Project and Oswaldo Paya. It was an early step to providing international attention and support to Mr. Paya and those who signed on to the Varela Project.

The resolution that was adopted last year 87 to 0 was obviously bipartisan, and the resolution that was just adopted last night is similarly bipartisan and builds on that previous consensus and highlights that upon which we can all agree. What is that?

The resolution that was adopted last night condemns the recent arrest and other intimidation tactics against democracy activists by the Castro regime, and it calls on the Cuban Government to immediately release those imprisoned during the most recent crackdown for the acts that the Government of Cuba wrongly deems “subversive, counter revolutionary, and provocative.”

The resolution adopted last night also reaffirms S. Res. 272, the Varela Project resolution, that the Senate unanimously agreed upon last year, which calls for, among other things, amnesty for all political prisoners. The resolution we adopted last night praises the bravery of those Cubans who, because they had simply practiced free speech and signed the Varela Project petition, have now been targeted in this most recent government crackdown.